

**NOW!**



## 215 Main Street

Single family estate built in 1848 by John B. Gough, for he and his wife, Mary Whitcomb Gough. John found the hill in northwest Boylston similar to the countryside of Kent, England, the land of his birth. This original

homestead began with the purchase of 26 acres of land with only a berry patch. The cornerstone of the mansion was laid on 22 August 1848. It was an Italianate architecturally styled 2 story building with 24 rooms. Farm buildings were also erected on the property with great barns, a chicken coop, a stable, a house for the farmer, as well as a combination bowling alley and gymnasium! Foundations and stonewalls were laid by masons. Rolling lawns were graded to beautify the grounds. Trees were planted and fragrant syringa (lilac) bushes were planted alongside a road leading to the homestead. The property grew to include nearby parcels, reaching a total of 255.5 acres. The rural peace, joy, and serenity sought by J.B. Gough on the rural hill in Boylston known as "Hillside" was born.

### *Gough recollection in his autobiography:*

*"On the 22nd of August (my birthday) the corner-stone of my house was laid .... It seemed a great undertaking to make a home for myself and wife. Many friends have asked why I chose a spot so far from the city, five miles from Worcester, and two miles from anywhere else. The fact is, I had become weary of city life, and longed for the country. Being pleased with this situation, I purchased twenty-six acres, built my house, and planted trees. Since that time, I have added to it, and now, I trust with a grateful heart, I sit with my friends under the shade of the tree my hand has planted."*

John B. Gough delivering over 8500 lectures become well-known for his theatrical styled orations in the United States, Canada, England, France, Scotland, and Switzerland. After his death (1886), the estate was purchased by William J. Hogg in 1890 and then was subsequently sold to Charles Hill Morgan, William Bloom, George F. Fuller and in 1953 it served as the campus for the Shepherd Knapp Day School with the farmhouse serving as a residence for the teachers, and in the 1980's the property was acquired by Digital Equipment Corporation as a meeting and training facility. The property was taken by the Town of Boylston through eminent domain proceedings in 1997.

On 19 March 1975, the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service declared the John Gough House a National Historic Landmark and it is now is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Town of Boylston, Massachusetts Municipal as well as other town offices and the sports fields for the town youth are maintained on the property. And for those who wish to take an enjoyable hike in the woods, the Hillside Natural Trail Network and Demonstration Forest is open for your exploration of wildlife stands or just a pleasurable hike in this historic area.